Friends' News

Christ Church Cathedral Dublin

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FRONT COVER: *The late Very Rev Des Harman*
BACK COVER: *The late Very Rev Des Harman with Fr Brian O'Sullivan at the PEATA Carol Service (Dec 2007)*

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From your Editor

Lesley Rue

Welcome to the spring edition of the *Friends News*. I hope you all had a relaxing Christmas.

Tuesday 18 December was an extremely sad day for the cathedral. It was then that we heard of the sudden death of our Dean, Desmond Harman. Des took a great interest in every aspect of the cathedral life, from producing the *Friends News* to cleaning the odd window. He was a great listener and his office door was always open. Des was appreciative of all the hard work done by the cathedral staff and volunteers.

Within the cathedral family he will be remembered for a lot of things, He was a man of many talents, a father figure with a very good sense of humour which was often heard in and around the cathedral. I will miss the spontaneous banter which lightened many a serious moment.

During the many services which Des presided over he was always a figure of dignity – but with a very obvious human side

To his wife Sue, children Mark, Karen and Lynn and his extended family my sincere sympathy. He will be greatly missed.

You will read a number of other tributes in this edition to Dean Desmond Harman.

He was a special guy

Lesley

Dear Friends

The Revd Canon Adrian Empey

The unexpected death of the late dean before Christmas has left a huge vacuum in the life of the cathedral community. It is still hard to believe what has happened. Daily routines are muted, as though some vital element is missing, as we struggle to maintain a sense of normality, which somehow always evades us. I suppose we should not be surprised by this, because in the course of his three years as dean 'Des' became part of our lives, as he moulded his team into his unobtrusive way of doing 'cathedral'. In a remarkably short time, he transformed not only the finances of Christ Church, but - more subtly – our relationships with each other. There was a palpable sense of purpose, a feeling that somehow we were getting there; and wherever 'there' may have been didn't much matter.

I have known Des all through my ministry in the Church of Ireland. Being a late vocation, I served as curate in St Ann's, Dawson Street, shortly after he was appointed to his first parish in Glasnevin and Santry, where my parents-in-law were included among the admiring and appreciative members of his flock. My first real association with him was through our membership of the Dublin Junior Clerical Society, which scored low on theology but disproportionately high on hilarity. Athanasius was not included among our clerical idols. Prudence dictates that I should draw the curtain on this notably odd but most entertaining clerical menagerie. As secretary-cum-treasurer, I managed to mislay our annual subscriptions for a time. No one really minded, and in the end they turned up inside a rather large but academically reputable dictionary! Suffice to say that even then I was aware that Des had certain administrative charisms that I plainly lacked, something that came to me powerfully this afternoon as I admired the amazing order of his office filing system. I don't know how Des put up with people like me, but I am sure it had to do with his wonderful understated sense of humour. It was also a measure of the man.

As the years passed, we all recognised that both the United Dioceses in particular and the Church of Ireland in general were the net beneficiaries of his vast competence. Whatever he touched was transformed into order. We may never know how much the church owed to him, precisely because he was integral to the system: around every corner, he was there. Most of all, we admired his unblinking frankness. He unfailingly told it like it was, in season and out of season; or in the immortal words of von Ranke:'wie es eigentlich gewesen.'

In my more despairing moments about the Church of Ireland, it is enough to remember Des with profound gratitude, unqualified respect, and an unfailing smile. *Atque in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale.*

Adrian

Precentor

Address given by Archdeacon Edgar Swann at the funeral of Dean Desmond Harman

I feel very honoured today to be asked by the family to speak about Desmond.

I have known him for some 43 years and it is so hard to encapsulate those years of Desmond's life's work into a few short pages, but I will do my best.

I first met him shortly after meeting his sister, Gladys. I had heard about Desmond and was more than apprehensive as to whether I would pass the test as a boyfriend of his beloved sister. Indeed, I think Gladys was apprehensive also. I need not have worried, he obviously liked the look of me and warned her not to mess me around. I could not have asked for a better brother-in-Law.

We both read Hebrew and Oriental languages, Desmond ahead by a year. Both of us were involved in the Hebrew and Oriental Languages Society in various positions. Even in College, certain skills were obvious in Desmond's character. He became engrossed in the editorship of *Trinity News*, a task in which he showed great talent. It was a talent which was to come to the surface again when he became editor of the *Diocesan Review*, holding this position for many years. Basically in an honorary capacity, he totally revised the appearance and the content and made it into a magazine the diocese could be proud of. It was indicative of the commitment and dedication which he gave to every task he undertook.

Desmond was in his element in the field of organisation and administration. He gave his all to the work he undertook as honorary secretary to the General Synod, being meticulous in keeping himself informed about everything which affected the Church of Ireland and its contribution to Ireland, North and South.

Much of his time of service was through the difficult days of the peace process, and they were often turbulent times in the history of the Church and Nation.

Desmond, however, was not only skilled in administration, he was a wonderful pastor.

He served as Curate-Assistant in Taney, where he met Sue. He became Rector of Santry and Glasnevin, and then Sandford and Milltown, with the chaplaincy of Alexandra College which he did so well.

I have met so many people who benefited from his pastoral care in the parishes where he served. As someone said to me in the last few days "Desmond was a very human person." That humanity never showed more clearly than when he was with children, his own, ours, our grand-children. He responded to them and they to him. For all the seemingly austere exterior at times, he could be the life and soul of a family party. He will be so missed when

we sit down together in the future. Indeed, there exists a photograph of Desmond at a family wedding on New Year's Eve which we threatened to publish in the *Review* if ever he caused us any trouble.

And what about Dogs. They were so much a part of this life and he loved them. One of his favourite services here was the PEATA Dogs. Indeed, some of the last photographs of him are hugging the dogs at this year's service.

Desmond also had a lifelong love of music, becoming skilled on the piano as a boy, and then the organ, which he studied under the famous Dr. Hewson. He loved his music, and had a very wide taste in it, but he liked it played well.

There is a story told of one occasion when in his home in Carrick when he was trying to have a lie in and Gladys was practising on the piano in the drawing room, very badly I believe. Eventually, he could stand it no longer, stormed down the stairs and closed the lid of the piano as Gladys hastily extracted her fingers from the keyboard. He once bought a piano when he was in college rooms. Together with friends he trundled the piano from McCullagh Piggott's into New Square, and into his college rooms, and lovingly restored it. Anyone who was invited to coffee was given a blade and expected to play their part in removing layers of dirt and polish.

From a young age, he adored the little Telford Organ in his home church of St. George's, Carrick-on-Shannon. He was often seen disappearing into the back of it to do some maintenance work or to re-tune it. I remember sitting pressing notes for hours while he would give instructions from inside. Even as a teenager, he would play for services and would go back every year to play for the Annual Regatta Service. Eventually, through his efforts, major restoration work was carried out on the organ. In his time at Sandford, under his direction, the organ was restored there as well.

Judy and all the music team in this place, including our two wonderful choirs, your music brought him so much pleasure. He would have been so proud of your Carol Service on the night before he died. Your music here today is as always so wonderful and is such a fitting tribute to him. Thank you.

The psalm chosen for today was chosen carefully. It speaks about "Praying for the Peace of Jerusalem." Desmond was so involved in things which involved bringing people together, breaking down barriers, and stretching across international boundaries.
His work for Bishops' Appeal was tireless over many years. Here in Dublin, he worked to make the Citizenship Service more meaningful, and, for the last few years he has traversed Northern Europe constantly in building and extending the Porvoo Agreement with our sister churches from the Lutheran tradition. I must be careful in my pronunciation: only recently he gave me a lesson in pronouncing Porvoo properly.

In 2004, Archbishop John Neill asked him to become Dean of this place. He was hesitant for many reasons, including family ones. However, when others would have coasted slowly

towards retirement, Desmond unselfishly accepted the challenge with the generous support of Sue and the family, a support which he had throughout his ministry.

In all too brief a period of 3½ years, he has done so much to turn around the finances, continued to restore the fabric, and build up the community here, and it has all been done with that honesty of unwavering integrity and care for people which he applied to everything in his life and ministry. We will miss the piercing questions, the perceptive comment, the sense of humour, the wisdom which he brought to our committees. The moments when we thought we had the perfect answer, but Desmond made us think again. He was not content with the easy answer, it had to be the right one, and morally right. I know that John and David and I will so miss our sharing with him at our senior staff meetings.

This cathedral, these dioceses, the whole Church of Ireland, mourn the untimely passing of someone of whom we can be rightly proud, someone who epitomised the very best in the life and ministry of our church. We will best honour his memory by carrying on his work with the same integrity which was his hallmark. Sue, Mark, Lynn, Karen, Gladys and all the other extended family: we thank you for sharing him with us, and for your personal sacrifices to enable him to be such a shining light in the Church of Ireland.

We all mourn him today, but you mourn him most, because your love for him was greatest and closest. Look around you and see this great congregation who are here to honour him and thank God for his life and witness, and know that the thoughts and the prayers of each person are with you in your grief.

I can only offer to you the faith that Desmond proclaimed: the faith of the Church, and my personal faith. In those words of comfort which Jesus spoke to Martha, and which were sung by the choir at the beginning of this service today.

" Your brother will rise again. I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me even though they die, will live, and everyone who believes in me will never die." Nobody believed more than Desmond.

May our beloved Desmond rest in the peace of the Christ he served so faithfully, and rise in the glory of his resurrection.

A tribute by the Archbishop – The Most Revd. Dr John Neill

It was in the late nineteen fifties that I first got to know Des Harman camping in the Wicklow mountains. I remember even then that Des was a tireless worker – even when he seemed to have drawn the short straw and spent a great deal of time in charge of the washing up of many very messy plates and pans! His good humour shone through. What I remember too about him then was that he was a person of faith and it was no surprise to me that in later years he was ordained.

We both served as curates at the same time in Dublin, though Des was senior to me. I remember when we were both young rectors in the diocese standing against Des in the election to the Standing Committee of General Synod. He won, and how good it was for this was to be an area in which over the years he was to make a substantial contribution. Of more recent years, when I was Anglican Co-chairman of the Porvoo Contact Group, Desmond joined as the Church of Ireland representative, and we spent a very interesting few days together at a theological consultation in Tallinn.

In the diocese, Desmond's work on the *Church Review* in totally revitalising that journal is well known and has been ably built upon by his successor, which is always a tribute in itself. It could be said that no other person had such an effect on the conscience of the parishes as he not only presented the claims of the Bishops' Appeal for World Development, but communicated these so successfully. Desmond served for many years on the Diocesan Council, and his contribution was always to question anything that had not been thought through, or which had not gone through the proper procedures, but such questioning was never to block progress, but to encourage progress built on a firm foundation.

As a parish priest in Santry and Glasnevin, in Sandford and Milltown, his care for people, his thoughtful preaching and his love for music and liturgy stand out as lasting memories. So often, those with such clear priorities are weak on administration, but certainly not in Desmond's case.

It was in 2004 that I invited Desmond to be Dean. Others will detail much of what he achieved in the Cathedral. As Archbishop, I am very aware of the immense work that he achieved in those few years, ensuring that the Cathedral enjoyed a very effective administrative and financial structure, and that everybody associated with the Cathedral enjoyed working together.

As Archbishop, I am officially advised by two archdeacons. I decided with their consent that it was proper to add the Dean to this small group who met with me in the See House each month for worship and planning and usually a meal together. It was an opportunity to address pastoral problems and to ensure that my oversight of the diocese took account not

only of what I perceived to be the main concerns. Because Des was not as intimately involved in many of the situations as were the respective archdeacons, he was able to make us pause, and often see things in a broader context, and to see the wider implications of a proposed course of action. Meetings were shorter when he was absent – but he was missed! I am going to miss Desmond for what he himself was as a friend and colleague, as much as for what he gave to us all.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Sue and the family as they mourn a beloved husband and father. Sue accompanied and supported Des throughout his ministry from the time of his curacy in Taney, and it was always a joy to enjoy their company together. Many have spoken of the warmth and hospitality of their home and family. Across those sad weeks in December, we saw the closeness of their family life, and that is a tribute to both Des and Sue. May God uphold Sue in her sad loss and may Desmond rest in the peace and love of the Lord whom he served so faithfully.

A tribute by the Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of all Ireland – The Most Revd. Dr Alan Harper

The death of Dean Desmond Harman and the particularly sudden and tragic nature of his passing has shocked us all. Dean Harman's many gifts were always generously and willingly deployed in the service of God to the Church of Ireland and we all give thanks for his life and devotion to the Church that he loved and served.

I want particularly to recall Dean Harman's contribution to the General Synod and the Standing Committee of the Church of Ireland. In particular I want to pay tribute to his meticulous and careful execution of the office of Clerical Honorary Secretary. There are four Honorary Secretaries, two clerical and two lay. Dean Harman was elected as one of the two Honorary Secretaries in 1999. That election, in itself, demonstrates the trust and esteem in which he was held by his clerical colleagues and his service as Honorary Secretary did not disappoint any of his admirers and, no doubt, made him many additional friends.

Desmond Harman was a master of detail, always tenacious in ensuring that proper procedures were followed. He spoke with careful deliberation and was always forthright. When the Dean spoke people listened. However, the work of an Honorary Secretary is much more than the sum of any public interventions. The Honorary Secretaries are, in effect, the business managers of Standing Committee and General Synod. Their careful preparation makes the work of the Standing Committee and the Synod both possible and orderly. In this respect Dean Harman made an immense contribution and the Church of Ireland is much in his debt.

Our thoughts and prayers are very much with his wife Sue and the family at this time. Furthermore, I think it appropriate that we should thank them for being willing to share Desmond with us in the way that they did. The duties of an Honorary Secretary are always onerous and always additional to the ongoing work of ministry. Families, not least the Harman family, make great sacrifices to enable that service to be rendered. We all mourn the passing of a man of complete integrity and faithfulness and we thank God for all that Desmond Harman did and all that he was.

A tribute by The RT Revd. Martin Wharton

Anglican Co-Chair of Porvoo Contact Group

Desmond Harman represented the Church of Ireland on the Porvoo Contact Group from October, 1992 until his sudden, unexpected and untimely death. He will be very sorely missed by me and by all his colleagues from the Porvoo Communion of Churches for his faithful commitment to ecumenism, his wisdom, his insight and his generosity of spirit.

It was a particular joy and delight for me to come to know Desmond well when I succeeded Archbishop John Neill as the Anglican Co-Chair and I quickly came to value his pertinent and shrewd observations. He always had a keen eye for detail, a (sometimes) wicked sense of humour, and a passionate enthusiasm for building upon and developing the relationships between the different churches. But it was always an enthusiasm expressed with gentleness and with Irish charm. In a nutshell he was the best kind of Anglican churchman and priest.

Only three months ago in October, 2007, the Primates from the Anglican churches in Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England met with their Scandanavian and Baltic Lutheran counterparts in Dublin. Desmond was responsible for making all the arrangements and for the subsequent five day meeting of the Porvoo Contact Group. He undertook this task with his customary aplomb. The whole event could not have been better organised and showed his ability to master detail, to plan well, and to organise effectively. He had to deal with the kind of unexpected complexities that always seem to arise in any international gathering, and did so with apparent calmness and lack of fuss. He didn't do it all himself, of course, but he knew instinctively how to value and harness the gifts of others and to work with them effectively – the hallmarks of any effective parish priest.

Desmond incarnated Irish hospitality. There are three evenings that will live long in the memory. One was with Sue, when she and Desmond invited all the members of the Contact Group to their home, gave us a wonderful supper which ended with a few songs around the sitting room piano. Before we arrived it must have taken Sue half an hour to light all the candles in their home. Our Scandinavian friends felt very at home, very well cared for and were very appreciative of the warmth and generosity of the Deanery hospitality.

Desmond and Sue had the intuitive sense and knack to make all those they met feel, not strangers, but friends. They made us all, whether from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Spain or Portugal as well as Britain and Ireland, feel very much at home in Dublin.

Then there was the splendid Eucharist to celebrate Porvoo in Christ Church Cathedral. Wonderful music, the Anglican Choral tradition at its every best, followed by a candlelit dinner in the Crypt, when the Primates were joined by diplomats from the Porvoo countries.

Superbly organised by Desmond and his colleagues and all down to his capacity for detailed planning and organisation. It was Irish hospitality at its very best.

And then there was an uproarious evening in one of Desmond's favourite Italian restaurants in the City, which included a sing along serenade by the waiters and waitresses.

Love of liturgy and love of life, faith and fun, care and service, shrewdness and generosity, worship and wisdom all came together in Desmond who lived out to the full his faith in a generous, gracious, self-giving and loving God. These are the very qualities – generosity, graciousness and self-giving which epitomised Desmond's life and ministry, and which we so enjoyed in the Porvoo Contact Group.

We are all the richer and better for having known him and worked with him. Together with Sue and her family, his colleagues and friends and the Christ Church Cathedral Community, we give our thanks to God for his life as we mourn his passing. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

Summer School 2006
Bishop Donald Caird, Mrs Caird and Nicola Gordon Bowe with the Dean on the ferry between Inis Oírr and Inis Meáin

The Dean, David Bockett, Paul Flynn and Judy Martin on Sunday 11 June 2006

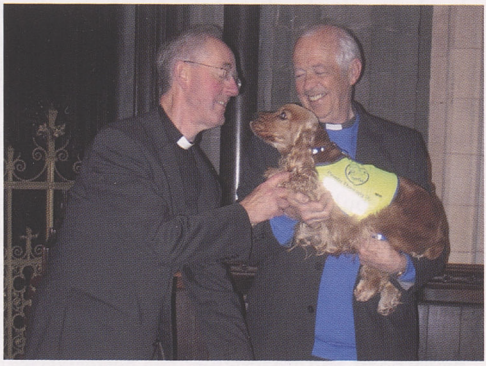
At the Annual Citizenship Service November 2007
Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, Archbishop John Neill, The Lord Mayor of Dublin Cllr. Paddy Bourke with the Dean

Colmcille September 2007
From left: Aonghas Dubh Mac Neacail, Brian Ferran, Aodán MacPóilín, Trevor Sargent Minister of State, Dean Desmond Harman, Risteard MacGabhann, Ronan Sheehan

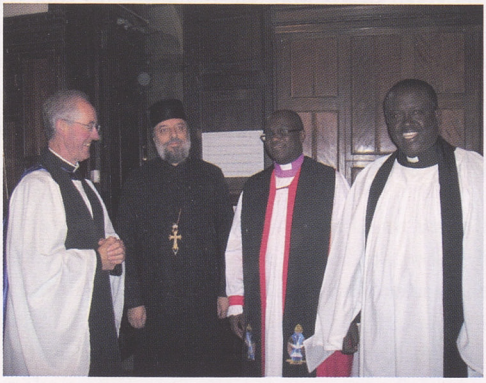
A relaxed Des – taking photos of the cathedral from Jury's Inn roof

The Dean shows the staff how to clean windows

The Papel Nuncio. Dr Guiseppe Lanzarotti, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, Archbishop John Neil, Dean Harman, Cardinal Connell



The Dean talking to "Willow" with Fr. Brian O'Sullivan



The Dean, Father Gheorghe Tudor of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Bishop Jered Kalimba of Shyogwe Diocese and the Revd. John Wesley Kabango of Shyogwe Diocese

Dean Harman and his wife Sue with their family Lynn, Mark and Karen.

Desmond Harman – The Revd. Mark Gardner (Dean's Vicar)

Among the many, many people who were in touch with Christ Church, one was a Russian schoolteacher who as a student lived for a while in Dublin. He told me that in the Orthodox tradition it is a sign of hope that a person should pass away at the time of a great festival of the Lord such as Christmas. I found this a very helpful statement of faith from a young person far away. We were struggling to cope with the shock of the Dean's untimely death, and the need to make the best arrangements we could for the funeral Eucharist. We were expecting a very large and representative attendance, and it was remarkable how many people gathered in such an atmosphere of quiet and dignity, in the face of the disaster which had affected us all, none more so than the Dean's family and friends.

I succeeded Des Harman as Rector of Glasnevin some years after he had moved to Sandford, but he was remembered there by many people including my mother, who served with him on the Parent-Teachers' Association of the Parish School. His concern for education and his rapport with children, his easy nature and quick efficiency were carried into his work in Christ Church where we all grew rapidly to appreciate his diligence and his fairness. We will miss him very much. He was taken from us so abruptly.

I wish I could remember which book the Dean was telling me about, which he valued highly and recommended to me. But looking on the internet I find Tom Allen writes about 'John Pritchard's inspiring book "The Life and Work of a Priest"'. Having read it a second time and chatted it over with other clergy I think it is the contemporary heir to Michael Ramsey's 20th century classic *The Christian Priest today* in its understanding of the joys and pressures of priesthood and its grasp of the ecclesiastical and social contexts in which we minister. The Dean had that grasp and that understanding, reflected in his work in so many aspects of the life of the Churches in Ireland and abroad. I learned a lot from him. I wish there had been time to learn more.

We opened a book of condolences in the Cathedral, and a large and varied number of people wrote in it. One message stands out: 'he brought laughter into Christ Church'.

Dean Desmond Harman

Kenneth Milne, Honorary Secretary, Friends of Christ Church

Desmond Harman earned respect and affection in his relatively short period as Dean of Christ Church. Other contributors to this issue and elsewhere have given him due credit for his achievements where the Porvoo Agreement, the Bishops' Appeal and the Church Review are concerned. This column will dwell on his work for the cathedral itself, where he quietly but firmly introduced policies to meet its needs as he saw them.

Building on the work of his predecessors, he sought to enhance the cathedral's contribution to diocese and city (his initiative in bringing together St Mary's Pro-cathedral and Christ Church for the annual Citizenship Service is an example of this). He clearly understood and valued the cathedral's musical tradition, and worked hard to support its development. Likewise, he showed a keen appreciation of the historical dimension of the cathedral's life, which introduced him to a widening circle of historians and archivists with whose work he more than once expressed himself fascinated. He enjoyed the sessions of the Church of Ireland Historical Society (held alternately in Dublin and Armagh) and missed none of their meetings once he had become co-chairman. It wasn't always easy to convince him of the value of fresh proposals, and rightly so, but once convinced, and having set his hand to the plough, there was no turning back, and his support was steady and imaginative.

Desmond valued the role that Christ Church had traditionally played in furthering the work of Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise, and endeavoured to augment its efforts to promote the use of the Irish language in Church of Ireland worship. This was evident in his enthusiasm for the introduction of specially-commissioned settings of Irish liturgical texts, with, it should be said, the wholehearted commitment of the Music Department, and which resulted in bringing full-scale musical renderings of Urnaí ná Nóna (Evensong) into the mainstream of cathedral worship. Similarly, he rejoiced to see the cathedral covering new ground through such innovative collaborations as those that brought Christ Church to the Aran Islands for a summer school and, reciprocally, Scots Gaelach psalm-singers and a related art exhibition to the crypt for 'Colmcille @ Christ Church' in the year just ended. We owe it to his memory to ensure that the opportunities opened up by these developments are not lost.

In many of the developments that he either initiated or encouraged, the late Dean identified the important part that the Friends played both corporately and individually. As he emphasised in his Trinity Sunday addresses, the cathedral lacks the core support that a parish church can draw from its parishoners and accustomed members, but the Friends make good that deficiency. He recognised, as have the deans before him, how vitally important it is for the cathedral to elicit the support of the parishes of the dioceses, and how since their foundation in 1929 the Friends of Christ Church have provided the personnel and the finances that often made the critical difference between the success and failure of a variety of cathedral ventures. He never ceased to draw attention to the need for good stewardship of

cathedral revenues, and to the vital importance of the income from the Welcome Desk and the Shop (both of which have strong links with the Friends).

Part of Dean Harman's legacy is the preparatory work that he had embarked on to provide Christ Church with a fund-raising strategy. He would want us to look forward, to engage with the ideas that he was in process of formulating and to see them through to fruition.

From the Director of Music

Judy Martin

It is common knowledge that the relationship between clergy and musicians can be tricky. Musicians are funny creatures, and the most distinguished cathedral organists and conductors are known to be some of the most awkward to work with. That said, when the relationship works, the positive energy produced can make a significant difference to the day–to–day experience of the worshipping community.

As Director of Music here at Christ Church, I was extremely fortunate to be given the chance to work with such a renowned Dean as Desmond Harman. He believed, as I do, that the music here is one of the strongest assets that the cathedral has, and that it can play an important role in the cathedral's outreach as well as its fundraising activities. After an initially cautious and meticulous (as all will remember!) examination and amendment of my proposals, Des would always give his backing to plans for the improvement of musical standards, the marketing of the choir and the presentation of the cathedral as a lively and energetic worshipping community. Indeed, the substantial changes that he supported to the constitution of the department and choirs have significantly increased the profile of the cathedral's music, and also its quality.

Des Harman's legacy, in musical terms, is substantial, and I haven't got space to include all details here. However, the one musical initiative we worked on most closely together was that of providing the Church of Ireland with an expanding library of liturgical and sacred music in Irish. I have always, as a musician, been most excited by contemporary music, and I had discussed with him various potential sources of funding for the commissioning of new music for the cathedral. As soon as I mentioned using Irish, a spark ignited inside him, funding was found, texts were discussed with composers and various bodies were on board. All I had to do was to discuss musical matters with the composers and, in a matter of months, we were singing an Evensong in Irish which included the premier of a substantial anthem by the celebrated Irish composer, Seóirse Bodley. Not content with just one such piece, and one such service, Des then managed to find more funding, more interest and another significant occasion and, just three months later we sang Evensong in Irish once again, this time with the addition of a newly-commissioned set of canticles, composed by the choir's own Simon MacHale. What a tremendous boost to this country's sacred repertoire, and a great chance for so many different bodies to combine to produce music for the Church. This would not have happened without the Dean's incredible support in driving the projects forward.

On a personal note, when I first worked with Des, he told me that he would be worried if, after the composer's name on a service sheet, he didn't see a death date! I think he thought that my love of contemporary music would result in services filled with 'squeaky gate music'. Fairly soon after he arrived, nervously, I scheduled Sir Michael Tippett's huge set of canticles, written for St. John's College, Cambridge, for Sunday Evensong. Although written

in 1961, these are still considered to be fairly 'cutting edge' in the world of Anglican music. At the end of the service I went to apologise to the Dean, and to explain my reasons for choosing this setting of the text. I needn't have worried; as he pre–empted any comment from me by telling me that he had a couple of recordings of these canticles and already loved them. That was an important afternoon in our working relationship, and over the coming months we were to have a great many conversations about the place of music within worship, and the power of music to inspire, provoke and comfort, and its ability to speak to people in ways that the spoken word cannot.

One of the most difficult challenges I face in providing music as part of the cathedral's ministry is to choose appropriate texts which, when combined with music, communicate the meaning and sentiment of the words. You can't tell people what to feel and how to respond to music within worship. I rely on sensing the atmosphere created during the musical parts of services, and comments from clergy and congregations, to assess the contribution of the choir and organ to worship. The Dean, being a musician himself, would advise, criticise and praise, but often no comment was needed, as the emotion showed on his face. I remember one occasion in particular when, on Palm Sunday afternoon, I had scheduled Francis Pott's setting of the text "My song is love unknown". Francis Pott is one of the greatest composers of sacred music alive today, and this piece is so emotionally draining that I find it difficult to conduct without tears running down my face! In context, when sung on Palm Sunday, the words and music have incredible power. Des had not heard this piece before, and we sang it as the anthem. As the final chords sounded and I lowered my hands, I expected the Dean to give the choir their cue to sit by saying "Let us pray". At this point there was total silence. I looked over at the Dean only to discover that he still had his head down. As we sat, he eventually stood, and very shakily began the prayers. I had never before seen him so emotionally moved by music that he really couldn't speak. Of course, this didn't help my state of mind, and several tears were shed during the latter part of that service!

Francis Pott, as many of you know, came to Dublin some months later when we recorded a disc of his music. He was delighted that we had such a supportive Dean, and the two corresponded for a while after Francis' visit. I would like to include, at this point, words contained in an email I received from Francis at Christmas, as soon as he heard that Des had died.

"I know that you'd built up a very warm working relationship and that this has come as a terrible blow to you. Desmond was the best and gentlest of souls, and went out of his way to make me feel warmly welcome whenever I was in Dublin. In his quiet and agreeable way he did all he could to support and understand the beating heart of the music establishment and I know he rightly had enormous admiration for you and all you have achieved. I shall miss his softly-spoken dry humour and his special kindness to everybody in the Cathedral community, including me."

On that note, may I say how much we as a music department, choirs, choir families and parents will miss Des. I will do my utmost to realise his vision for the music here as we continue to miss more and more of his thoughts, his energy, his humour and his unwavering

love and dedication towards the cathedral and its people. I think I was the last person to see him at Christ Church and, as he left through the Chapter House door, he told me off for molly–coddling him, as I wished him well for his time in hospital. He brought so much laughter and good humour into Christ Church; sometimes as I took a deep breath, in a meeting, to criticise someone angrily, he would simply wink at me and that anger would immediately subside. What a great man, and what a tragedy for us all. I can only hope and pray that God took him from us because he felt heaven needed him more than we did.

Friends Annual

General Meeting Sunday 18 May 2008.

More details in next issue.

Tribute from the Assistant Director of Music Tristan Russcher

The Dean was a great lover of organ music and was consistently appreciative and supportive of the cathedral organists. His favourite piece, the Prelude and Fugue in G Major BWV541, was played at his installation, and apparently it was the first record he ever owned. Since his record's release performance practice has changed somewhat, his comment to me was 'you played it so differently I barely recognised the piece, it was amazing!' One of the highlights of last year's festival was David Briggs' accompaniment of the cathedral choir for the Trinity Sunday Eucharist, in which Briggs used the tune St Patrick's Breastplate as a theme throughout his numerous improvisations. Briggs' impressive imagination and bombastic technique literally almost brought down the organ loft. I said to the Dean following the service, 'no, you can't have him as your organist, he lives in New York', to which the reply was 'we don't want him, your playing's much more subtle and appropriate, he still thinks he's in Gloucester!' It was the subtle things, such as the raising of an eyebrow after a particularly 'purple' last-verse arrangement that let us know that he appreciated what was going on in the organ loft.

Flowers

We are very grateful to those people who generously gave donations towards flowers and arranged them over the past few months:

Mrs Gay Brabazon, Muriel Ebbs, Carolyn Gray (in memory of her husband), Gwen Hinde (in memory of Geraldine Willis), Peter Kermode (in memory of Paul), Bill & Gwen Martin, Maureen Reid, Douglas & Eileen Slator, Breigeen Cosgrave (in memory of Ian Taplin), Miss A Rutherfoord, Jo Wilkinson (in memory of Rev Bill Wilkinson and Bill Jolley).

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Christ Church Cathedral Dublin

Services and Events 2008

Members of all Christian Churches are welcome to receive the Holy Communion.
10.00 Morning Prayer and 17. 00 Evening Prayer take place in the Quire.
Peace Prayers are said at Noon. The daily Eucharist is said at 12.45 in the Lady Chapel.

FEBRUARY

Wednesday 6	Ash Wednesday	
	18.00	Sung Eucharist
Wednesday 13	13.15	Lunchtime concert St. Benedict School

MARCH

Saturday 1	12.00- 15.00	Meeting of members of the Anglican Third Order of St Francis
Sunday 2	11.00	Preacher, Canon John McCullagh
Saturday 8	20.00	Hibernian Orchestra Concert
Friday 14	20.00	Concert: St Patrick's Festival
Saturday 15	17.00	St Patrick's Festival: Urnaí na Nóna (Choral Evensong)

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

Sunday 16	Palm Sunday	
	11.00	Dramatic reading of St Matthew Passion
Tuesday 18	12.00	Chrism Eucharist (instead of Maundy Thursday)
Thursday 20	18.00	Sung Eucharist (Maundy Thursday)
Friday 21	Good Friday	
	15.30	Evensong and Proclamation of the Cross
Saturday 22	Easter Eve	
	21.00	Easter Vigil and Confirmation
Sunday 23	Easter Day	
	11.00	Festival Eucharist. Preacher, the Archbishop
	15.30	Festival Evensong
Sunday 30	11.00	Preacher, Canon Comerford

APRIL

Saturday 5	17.30	Recitation of the Gospel according to St John
Saturday 12	17.00	Royal School of Church Music event at the Pro-Cathedral, Marlborough St. (Said service at Christ Church)
Tuesday 15		Handel Festival Concert with the Choir of St Patrick's Cathedral
Friday 18		Handel's Messiah at Christ Church